



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Multi-National Brigade (East)
Camp Bondsteel
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MNB(E) real estate claims program

CAMP BONDSTEEL, Kosovo -- In response to recent questions, U.S. KFOR officials are repeating information regarding the real estate claims program, which compensates owners whose property was damaged, occupied or used by U.S. forces since June 10, 1999.

“Based on what I have seen,” said Capt. Justin Hunter, Camp Bondsteel Judge Advocate General, “the real estate claims program is a success in that it affords private owners an opportunity to earn income from their property. Although KFOR is not required to pay rent to landowners because UNSCR 1244 and the MTA gives KFOR immunity for damages caused to property holders, the U.S. Army created a Standard Operating Procedure in 2003 for Kosovo operations that authorizes rent payments to private landowners for the use of their land.

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“In that regard, the SOP created a gratuitous payment scheme for landowners when none was required,” he said.

To date, US KFOR has converted 224 claims into leases. Claims that are received in the real estate office are converted into leases only after all the appropriate documentation is received, reviewed, approved and funding certified.

Currently, there are 130 claims pending. However, not all claims awaiting processing will be converted into leases. Thus far, there are 30 denied claims.

The real estate claims program is administered by the Real Estate Contracting Office (RECO) as an extension of HQ IMA-E, which has responsibility for keeping information on the number of real estate claims that have resulted in leases and the amount of dollars paid under the program.

The JAG assists the real estate office in determining whether the claimants have presented sufficient proof of ownership. Once proof of ownership is established, the JAG office makes a recommendation to RECO to proceed with preparation of the lease. The JAG does not prepare the lease since it is executed on a standard form consistent with the SOP. The JAG office only keeps a record of the number of claims that are received in that office and then forwarded with recommendation to RECO.

“In connection with that, a substantial amount of land under Camp Bondsteel, over half, is claimed by socially owned entities and note again, the SOP does not permit the payment of real estate claims leases, to socially owned entities,” Hunter said.

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“Furthermore, UNMIK Regulation 2000/47, Section 8, grants the right to KFOR to use public property free of charge. It is not a matter of discretion whether we pay rent for the property. It is simply not permitted by the SOP,” he added.

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